

For Romania, accession to NATO represents a major evolution, which will have a decisive influence on the foreign and domestic policy of the country. Romania becoming a NATO member represents the guarantee of security and external stability, which is vital for ensuring the prosperous development of the country; it confirms the place of the Romanian state in the western family; it ensures the access to the process of reaching major decision on European and Euro-Atlantic security; it gives the opportunity to demonstrate the capacity of coping with the demands required by the member status and to contribute to promoting the objectives of the Alliance.

Euro-Atlantic integration has represented a major objective of the Romanian foreign policy, which has been pursued steadily by all the governments succeeding as of 1990 (chronology of Romania-NATO relations).

Romania has formally requested to accede NATO in 1993. One year later, Romania became the first state to answer the invitation to participate in the Partnership for Peace, a programme aimed at Euro-Atlantic co-operation on security matters, with a major role in the process of including new members of NATO.

In April 1999, NATO launched the action Plan in order to admit new members (Membership Action Plan - MAP). As part of this mechanism, Romania drafted its own national annual Plan for preparation of accession (PNA), which establishes the objectives, measures and deadlines for their fulfillment, with a view to orienting, sustaining and assessing the efforts to be made for preparing the accession to the Alliance.

A major contribution to the good preparation of accession was brought by the strengthening of internal inter-institutional co-operation, structured as the National Commission for Romania's accession to NATO, and of the external one, by co-operation with other candidate states for accession, in the Vilnius Group, as well as testing the inter-operability with allies and the actual capacity of contributing to NATO objectives and missions, by Romania's substantial participation in peacekeeping operations under the aegis of NATO, UNO, OSCE and in the fight against terrorism.

At the NATO summit in Prague (November 21-22, 2002), on the basis of evaluation of the progress made by candidate states, the heads of states and governments of NATO member countries decided to invite Romania, together with six other states - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia - to begin talks for accession to the North-Atlantic Alliance.

The experience of successive cycles of the National Action Plan (PNA) allowed better knowledge by NATO of the countries invited and the reforms they had made, on one hand, and by the countries invited of the principles and working methods characteristic to the Alliance, which made possible the accession talks between the countries invited and the Alliance being reduced to only two rounds of talks.

Romania, and the other six states invited, has drafted a Calendar for finalisation of reforms needed to ease integration in the alliance, a document passed by government and the President of Romania. The calendar of reforms was sent to the Alliance,

annexed to the letter of intention which the minister of foreign affairs conveyed to the NATO secretary general, which confirmed Romania's interest, will and capacity to assume the pledges resulting from the status of member of the Alliance.

The ambassadors of the NATO member states signed accession Protocols to NATO for Romania and the other six states invited to accede, during a March 26, 2003, ceremony in Brussels. After the signing of Protocols by the states invited, they have gradually become involved with Alliance operations, by participating as observers, with the works of most of the allied structures.

With the signing of accession Protocols, the process of ratification of protocols has also been launched in ally countries, at the end of which the states invited will accede to the North-Atlantic Treaty, and thus become full members of NATO.

As a future member of NATO, Romania is readying to assume an active and efficient role in promoting the values and objectives of the Alliance, by both participating in the operations and missions of the Alliance, and in the plane of conceptual initiatives and evolutions.